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REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-8, 11-14 and 17-20 remain in the application.

Claim 1 and 14 are herein amended.

Examiner has rejected claims 1, 8 and 14 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by US patent no. 6,260,376 issued to Khelifa et al. on July 17, 2001 (herein after the Khelifa reference).

The applicants argue that the Khelifa reference describes an air-conditioning installation having a primary circuit illustrated at 10, as well as a secondary circuit illustrated at 20, in figures 1, 2 and 3. It is clear from these figures and from the description that a first refrigerant circulates in the primary circuit 10 and a second refrigerant circulates in secondary circuit 20. For instance, in column 5, lines 8 to 9 of the Khelifa reference, it is stated that "*there is complete decoupling between the primary circuit 10 and the secondary circuit 20*".

In the Khelifa reference, cold refrigerant is stored in cold reservoir 2, as illustrated in figures 1 to 4. It is clearly stated in the Khelifa reference that the cold reservoir 2 "*in itself forms a closed system, that is to say that the storage medium 4 [in the cold reservoir 2] can be used entirely for storing cold*" (lines 25 to 27 of column 6). Therefore, it is clear that the medium is confined to the cold reservoir 2 in the Khelifa reference.

Therefore, in view of the Khelifa reference, claim 1 is herein amended so as to specify that the medium of heat storage in the present application is "*directed [after the first refrigerant has absorbed heat from the medium] to an evaporation stage to absorb heat in an air-conditioning cycle*". This limitation is clearly absent from the Khelifa reference, whereby the rejecting under 35 USC 102(b) is herein traversed.

With regards to claim 8, it is clearly stated that the medium of heat storage is "*directed to said heat exchange means [of the energy storage stage] to absorb heat from air in the ventilation system*". This limitation is clearly absent from the Khelifa reference, whereby the rejection under 35 USC 102(b) is herein traversed.

With regard to claim 14, the applicants argue that the step iii of "*cooling air of a ventilation system by heat exchange with said medium in said second state such that*

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said medium generally returns to said first state" is clearly not taught by the Khelifa reference. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 14 under 35 USC 102(b) is herein traversed. Moreover, in view of the cited documents, the applicants further amend claim 14 to remove subject matter not considered relevant to the distinctions between the method described in claim 14 and the methods associated with the systems described in the prior art.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, this application is deemed to be in condition for allowance, and early notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

Serge DUBÉ et al.

By:



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(Date)

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